



Australian Government

Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority

Essential Actions for Emergency Disposal of Foreign Fishing Vessels

You should seek the advice of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (GBRMPA) on suitable sites if you are in the Marine Park. If a vessel is to be scuttled or incinerated, you must minimise the social and environmental impacts of that action by:

- Ensuring the vessel is clean, non-polluting and will not move or break-up
- Scuttling the vessel only in areas that minimise environmental impacts
- Identifying and avoiding conflicts with existing users, including indigenous uses, navigation routes, commercial and recreational fishing grounds, research, and existing tourism and recreation sites
- Reporting and safety requirements [you must provide a written report about the action to the GBRMPA and the relevant Minister – see over page].



Site Selection

The vessel should only be scuttled in an area that:

- Will minimise environmental impact - for example, only on superficially bare, low relief areas like sand, soft sediment or coral rubble - **not** on live coral or other high priority benthic communities
- Is sufficiently removed (>1km) from natural coral reef, shoal or other structured habitat areas
- Is not used by others - for example **not** in trawling grounds, navigation areas or near research tourism sites
- In sufficient water depth (>100 metres) and at a location to prevent navigation hazard and the movement/fragmentation of the material under expected long-term weather conditions at that site

Vessels should not be scuttled in the Buffer Zone, the Scientific Research Zone, the Marine National Park Zone or the Preservation Zone (see zoning maps).

Call our Oil Spill Hotline on (07) 3830 4919 for help with rapid selection of an environmentally appropriate emergency disposal site.

Preparation and Observation

Prior to scuttling:

- The vessel should be appropriately inspected, cleaned and treated
- Hazardous or toxic materials should be identified and appropriately managed before any action. It may not be appropriate to attempt to incinerate toxic materials
- Marine Pests should be identified and appropriately managed **before** any action.
- All packaged chemicals and fuels are appropriately removed or destroyed before sinking, so that they are not released into the water column
- All buoyant and easily broken or dislodged materials are removed/destroyed
- Select a site in an area relatively free of currents and **not** up-current of reef or islands
- All efforts must be made to ensure that the scuttled vessel is suitably weighted and negatively buoyant to sink rapidly and remain stable on the bottom in the immediate area. This will minimise the chance of the material moving to a sensitive area or impacting adjacent areas.


Following the sinking:

- A watch should be kept to at the site to identify and collect all floating debris and to recover/absorb where appropriate any surface films of floating chemicals. Therefore the timing of an incineration/scuttling should allow for an appropriate period of daylight after the event to ensure an effective watch and clean up occurs.

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our great barrier reef
let's keep it great





Call our Oil Spill Hotline on (07) 3830 4919 for help with rapid selection of an environmentally appropriate emergency disposal on site.

What are my obligations?

You are responsible for ensuring that all appropriate measures are taken to address the safety of life and property in accordance with applicable laws relating to navigation of vessels and occupational health and safety. You will need to contact the relevant Commonwealth and State departments to obtain information on their requirements.

For example, you may need to mark the site and advise the Australian Hydrographic Office and Maritime Safety Queensland of the location of the materials.

Reporting

If you take action to sink or incinerate a vessel or material within the Marine Park in circumstances that do not require a permit, you **must** provide a written report about the action to the GBRMPA and to the Minister. An action carried out under under Section 15 of the Sea Dumping Act, requires a report with:

- a. The name and address of the person giving the report
- b. The date of the relevant conduct and the time at which it took place (in Eastern Standard Time)
- c. The depth of water where the relevant conduct took place
- d. The co-ordinates of the site where the relevant conduct took place (specified in degrees, minutes and seconds of latitude and longitude) as determined by reference to the Geocentric Datum of Australia, worked out as accurately as possible in the particular case
- e. The name (if any) and the registration or other identifying mark or marking of the vessel, aircraft or platform from or on which the relevant conduct took place
- f. The name of the owner and of the person in charge of the aircraft, vessel or platform from or on which the relevant conduct took place
- g. The name of the person or persons whose conduct facilitated, caused or constituted the relevant conduct
- h. A description of the method used in carrying out the relevant conduct
- i. The reason for the relevant conduct
- j. If controlled material (other than a vessel, aircraft or platform) was dumped into the sea, incinerated at sea, loaded for dumping or incineration, or placed as part of an artificial reef placement — the following information about the controlled material (worked out as accurately as possible in the particular case):
 - i) a general description
 - ii) its chemical composition
 - iii) its form
 - iv) its volume or mass
 - v) the method of packaging or containment (if any)
- k. If a vessel, aircraft or platform was dumped into the sea, incinerated at sea, loaded for dumping or incineration, or placed as part of an artificial reef placement — the following information about the vessel, aircraft or platform:
 - i) whether it was a vessel, an aircraft or a platform
 - ii) its name (if any) and its registration or other identifying mark or marking
 - iii) its dimensions (including mass), worked out as accurately as possible in the particular case
 - iv) the method of packaging or containment (if any).

